

Recreation Committee Meeting Notes
October 3rd, 2023

Members in attendance: Sheri Lynn, Mark Fausel, Kirsten Santor, Kate Kreider

Members of the public in attendance: Jack Lazarowski (Senior Center), Lisa Miller (Selectboard member)

Meeting started at 7:01 PM

Public comment and non-agenda items: Sheri mentioned that Duncan will assist with setting up the meetings and will be available if we have any questions or issues, but he will no longer be attending our meetings.

7:05 PM: Approval of September minutes: Kirsten motions to approve the September meeting minutes, Mark seconds. No discussion. Minutes unanimously approved.

7:06 PM: Review of park use events: Sheri reviewed upcoming events. No concerns or discussion.

7:08 PM: Programs and events the Recreation Committee may be able to support: Kate reported that she reached out to the Richmond rec soccer organizer but she did not get a response. She can try reaching out again before the next meeting.

7:10 PM: Discussion regarding improving communication: Mark and Kirsten attended a recent selectboard meeting and participated in a discussion regarding communication. Kirsten suggests members of this committee watch the recording of the selectboard meeting starting at about 45 minutes in. The selectboard chose two members to attend the next Recreation committee meeting in November. Selectboard members Lisa and Jeff plan to attend our next meeting. Mark expressed that Lisa already knows our committee well and what we do, therefore Mark feels that it would be better if a different selectboard member attends our next meeting. Sheri mentioned that Duncan told her that Richmond has added four new committees in this year alone, and the Recreation committee hasn't been back as an active committee for very long, so it makes sense that the selectboard members may not really know what our committee does. Kirsten stated that during the recent selectboard meeting they discussed some ways that communication between our committee and the selectboard and/or other committees can be improved. Kirsten states that the idea of possible liaisons between the selectboard and other committees is one suggested idea. Lisa stated that members of our committee are welcome to attend selectboard meetings and to speak up during the selectboard meetings if we have any concerns or questions. Sheri agreed with these suggestions and expressed that both our committee members and the selectboard members could take some steps to improve communication.

Kirsten mentioned that there was also some discussion about the town's recreation budgets during the selectboard meeting. As far as this committee is aware, we do not have any control

over the town recreation budgets. Selectboard members during the recent meeting seemed to feel that the Recreation committee has some control of the two recreation related town budgets. This committee would like to have more information about these budgets, what they are used for, and whether or not our committee has any control over how the funds are spent. Kate suggested that we ask Josh for clarification regarding these town budgets. Sheri volunteered to email Josh.

7:29 PM: Work plan: Sheri reviewed some new suggestions that the committee discussed in September and she added to the work plan. Under events/programming, she added a snow shoeing event in February, doing a green up event in each town, and possibly supporting youth recreational sports. Under Volunteers Green, Sheri added possibly having a liaison from our committee for the new short-term Volunteers Green and Browns Court committee that is deciding how to use the ARPA funds. Duncan suggested that our committee could do a presentation to the new committee of the work that we have done over recent years related to Volunteers Green. Mark stated that he has spoken to one of the members of the new committee, Fran Thomas, and she said that her committee is going to do a public walk around to identify areas in need of improvement or repair. Mark suggested making a case to use ARPA funds for addressing the neglected maintenance of our recreation areas.

Lisa mentioned that at the selectboard meeting last night they approved a contractor for cleaning up the bathroom facilities at Volunteers Green, and FEMA funds are being used for this project. Lisa suggested that feedback after this cleaning is completed from community members who use the bathrooms would be helpful. Mark suggested possibly improving the bathrooms for the future and making them more flood resistant. Lisa mentioned that if we have suggestions of specific things that we or the selectboard can put a price tag to that would be great. Lisa stated that there is good funding for town road/highway maintenance, but not much funding or forethought about maintenance of other structures in town. Mark stated that the ARPA committee seems more interested in new structures, but wonders who is going to pay for the ongoing maintenance. Kirsten mentioned a discussion in the past regarding the town creating a maintenance budget to cover needed repairs and maintenance. Lisa mentioned that the purpose of the ARPA money was to be "rescue" funds, not for general maintenance, so this may be why the ARPA committee is more focused on possible new structures. Lisa stated that long term, good preventative maintenance is much better than corrective maintenance. It appears that the town has overlooked the maintenance of its recreational structures for many years.

Sheri discussed options for working with the Volunteers Green and Brown's Court committee and ensuring that we have good communication with this committee. Mark plans to attend the walk around and will let us know when it is. We can attend if we would like and talk with the new committee members and share some ideas. Kirsten appreciates how integral Sheri has been on our committee and how much she has done.

Sheri reviewed the funding and grant writing section of our work plan. First we need to learn more about the budgets and how much say we have over them. Sheri suggested possibly having a member of our committee serve as a liaison to the Volunteers Green and Browns

Court committee and attend all or some of their meetings. It is not necessary for us to do this and it would be a significant time commitment, but it is worth considering. Kirsten stated that during her maternity leave from this committee, we are welcome to email her if there are specific things or items that we need assistance with and she is happy to help. Sheri reviewed the outreach and education section of our work plan. Sheri mentioned that she needs to learn how to update the website with Kirsten gone and that Duncan can also help with updates as needed. Kirsten suggested that it may be a good idea to have another person learn how to do website updates too.

Discussed recruitment of members and how we can encourage people to join. Sheri spoke to Duncan and was told that a quorum is based on the total number on the committee, including vacancies. This means that when Kirsten is on leave, all three of the remaining committee members will need to attend in order to have a quorum. Kirsten suggested that the Volunteers Green and Browns Court committee could be a good resource for bringing in new members. The committee is very short-term, and maybe some of those members would be interested in joining our committee after they are done serving on the special committee. It may also be helpful to give more information about the time commitment when recruiting, such as mentioning that the meetings are only 1 ½ hours once a month, that it doesn't require a lot of time outside of the meetings, and that we typically take a month off in the summer and a month off in the winter around the holidays.

Sheri stated that one of the main priorities of the Volunteers Green and Brown's Court committee is conducting community engagement. It will be interesting to see what feedback they get and how it compares to the ARPA outreach results and the results of the survey that this committee did a couple summers ago. Popular responses from our committee survey included: a pool, a dog park, pickleball courts, tennis courts, a hard surface walking loop, and a basketball court. Kirsten stated that there is a small memorial garden near the bandshell that has been neglected. It is very overgrown and most people are not even aware that it is there. Maybe this is something that our committee could help revitalize. Mark mentioned that there is a gardening committee now and they may be interested in helping with this project. Lisa stated that the town is paying Mary Houle to plant and tend flowers around the town center and she loves doing it and she does a great job. Mary may be interested in working on revitalizing the memorial garden. Lisa suggested we could check in with Connie or Josh regarding funding to purchase flowers and plants that would be needed for the memorial garden.

Sheri discussed the snowshoeing event idea for February and whether or not this committee is interested in doing this. Kate mentioned that the library's snow shoes are still in excellent condition and it would be good to promote their use again this winter. Kate is willing to help with a snowshoeing event if it's only one day. She may not be available to help with multiple snowshoeing events. Sheri suggests that we will only do it in one or two towns since we have very limited members and time. Kirsten suggested asking for community members to volunteer to help out. Jack mentioned that he's happy to help promote a snowshoeing event and reach out for volunteers. Kirsten also suggested reaching out to the Trails committee to see if they are

interested in guiding group snowshoeing hikes. Since we have so few members it is important that we focus on organizing things and reaching out to other people and groups for volunteers.

8:18 PM: Preparation for discussion with Selectboard members: Sheri asked members to send her an email with any items or talking points for our discussion with selectboard members next month and she will compile the information. Mark suggested adding the compiled list of items/talking points to the agenda for the selectboard members to see and review before the meeting. Kirsten mentioned that Duncan offered to look up information regarding the formation of this committee when it was restarted, the reasoning of why the committee was formed the way it was, and the committee's history. Discussed also creating a list of the things that our committee has accomplished over the last three years. We will also discuss communication and easy to improve communication. If we have clarification regarding the town's recreation budgets by our next meeting, then we can discuss the town's recreation funds and the maintenance needs. Mark suggested that we can also discuss communication and making connections with other Richmond committees.

8:26 PM: Meeting unanimously adjourned.